

## AN ASTROLOGICAL LOOK AT THE UNITED NATIONS

by Jane Lewis

The following article is an abridged version of a talk on the United Nations given in July 2010 at the WESA Conference, based on the chart for the date when the UN Charter came into force on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1945. The first part of the talk outlined the history, organisation structure and main activities of the UN and summarised its main strengths and weaknesses, its successes and failures as assessed by Jussi Hanhimaki in his concise book *THE UNITED NATIONS: A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION*, which forms part of that series published by Oxford University Press (ISBN978-0-19-530437-4). The author is Professor of International History and Politics at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva and editor of the journal *COLD WAR HISTORY*.

I based my interpretation of the UN horoscope on Hanhimaki's conclusions about the relative successes and failures in an attempt to find out to what extent his findings are reflected astrologically.

For the purpose of this article, it will be helpful to note that the four principal aims which the UN set itself in 1945 were:

- 1 To safeguard **peace and security**
- 2 To reaffirm faith in fundamental **human rights**
- 3 Respect for **international law**
- 4 To promote **social progress and better standards of life**

The main challenge to the UN is the fact that it has no power of its own and cannot act independently of nation states. In a sense, it is faced with an almost impossible task and so we should probably not be too harsh in judging what it has achieved. It is confronted with the immensely difficult job of trying to balance national sovereignty against international idealism, and national security against international security. Whilst trying to reconcile many conflicting national interests, it faces a wide gap between its ambitions and capacities, and is described as being inadequately funded with matters made worse because of corruption. Duplication and overlap of aid reduces the efficiency of development work. The UN is described as a structural monstrosity, "a weird Picasso abstraction" much in need of reform but instead it has a tendency to build new structures on top of already existing ones rather than reform.

As we look back in 2010 to what the UN has achieved in the first six decades of its existence, we can perhaps say that it has failed to achieve its principal aims because peace is 'still waiting to break out', because there has been a great proliferation of nuclear weapons, because masses of people still live in abject poverty, because there are still gross social and economic inequalities with richest countries benefiting most, and because there is wide evidence of human rights abuses: torture, denial of political rights.

In spite of this, Hanhimaki concludes that the UN is not an obsolete or ineffective organisation but one that still has an indispensable role to play. The UN has done a lot of

humanitarian work, and in its peace-keeping role has managed difficult conflicts, eased tensions and helped to solve crises. In fact, it has saved or altered the lives of thousands if not millions of individuals. Whilst nuclear weapons have indeed proliferated they have not been used for over sixty years and around 189 states have signed up to the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty. The UN has done more than any other organisation or single nation to alleviate the economic and social problems of developing countries, international trade has increased, and *per capita* income across the globe has increased threefold. Good progress has been made in developing countries to increase life expectancy, reduce child mortality, increase access to education and raise literacy levels.

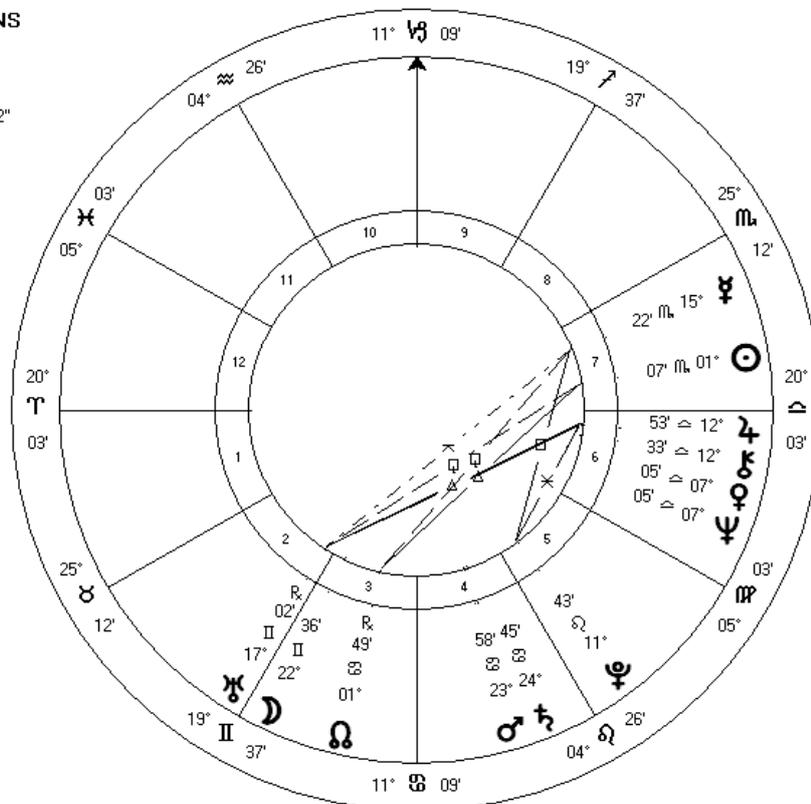
UNICEF has raised the nutritional standards of children in developing countries, provided social welfare, vaccinations, training in child rearing, provided maternity wards and health centres, supplemental meals and teacher training.

In the domain of human rights, revolutionary achievements have been made through the International Bill of Rights which provides a universally approved set of principles to protect men and women against all forms of abuse, and the UN has raised issues of global significance including women, climate change and the environment.

All in all, the United Nations is described as representing a 'true gathering of the family of nations' or the 'parliament of man'.

### The UN Horoscope

**UNITED NATIONS**  
**Natal Chart (2)**  
24 Oct 1945  
16:45 EST +5:00  
Washington, DC  
38°N53'42" 077°W02'12"  
Geocentric  
Tropical  
True Node



## **Astrological Indicators of Strengths, Problems and Challenges**

### *A Lack of funds?*

The United Nations does not have any money of its own, all funding being levied from its members. The eighth house relates to other people's money and we see that Scorpio is on the eighth cusp, so we can conclude that the UN does actually have access to deep resources: the eighth is ruled by Mars which is in Cancer in the fourth, indicating that the funds come from the different member nations.

It is always easy to blame the lack of money for a problem, and we have heard the UN described as a 'penniless hybrid'. Judging from its chart, though, we might well ask if it *should* be penniless because Venus (wealth) rules the second house. Venus itself is conjunct Jupiter and Neptune, which theoretically makes limitless funds available to it. The issue of funding is therefore not so much the lack of intrinsic wealth but rather its application, management and conservation. What happens in practice is that Neptune undermines and erodes the vast resources it has at its disposal through unwise spending, corruption and wastage caused by the duplication of bodies with overlapping functions.

The UN has been called a 'structural monstrosity', a cumbersome conglomeration of organisations, divisions, bodies and secretariats: one might say that the UN 'family' quickly over-extended itself and has got lumbered with too many hangers-on! The tendency towards proliferation and duplication can be attributed to the very strong Mercury, one of the strongest planets overall in the chart. Mercury duplicates and replicates – there are literally too many arms and too many hungry budget-mouths all demanding to be fed. Mercury is closely quincunx Uranus which shows that it has 'too many irons in the fire', with the result that its resources are scattered. It also suggests a tendency for the organisation to overestimate itself. The Libra stellium in the sixth house comprising Venus, Neptune, Jupiter and Chiron shows the danger of over-reaching itself.

### *Conservatism*

The chart indicates entrenched conservatism which works against the need for reform. It has a tendency to build new structures on top of already existing ones rather than introduce much-needed reform. Conservatism is shown by the strong Cancer-Capricorn axis with Mars, the chart ruler and Sun ruler in Cancer in the fourth conjunct Saturn. Capricorn-Cancer give strong leanings towards bureaucratic structures as well as conservatism. The Scorpio Sun makes an exact sesquiquadrate to Uranus showing a natural resistance to changing and reforming itself.

### *All Talk*

The UN is criticised for being a 'weird Picasso abstraction', suggesting that its efforts don't amount to anything very substantial in practical terms. We should look to the elemental imbalances in the horoscope to see why: there is rather too much air and insufficient earth,

in other words, a danger of there being too much talk about ideals and not enough effective action through which to ground them or turn them into reality. The basic balance of elements in the chart is cardinal air, shown by the strong Mercury and emphasis on the cadent houses three and six. The majority of planets are in the air signs Gemini and Libra, showing the inherent danger of its being little more than a talking shop. The UN is famous for its conferences. In contrast, it has no planets in earth signs and only one in fire.

Critics say it is ineffectual in achieving anything concrete of great significance. Certainly, given its lofty aims of securing world peace and making the world a better and safer place it cannot as yet boast that it has come very near to succeeding in its goals. Indeed, it cannot be denied that peace is 'still waiting to break out', that the last sixty years has seen a great proliferation of nuclear weapons, that masses of people still live in abject poverty, that gross social and economic inequalities exist, and that human rights abuses are still rife.

### *Gap between Its Ambitions and Capacities*

There is certainly a gap between its ambitions and its capacities. The strength of the Sun in a chart indicates the degree of personal effectiveness but the UN Sun is not particularly well-integrated, its only planetary aspect being a sesquiquadrate to Uranus, which explains the difficulties it has in expressing itself and achieving its basic aims and life purpose.

This Sun-Uranus connection shows that reform – revolution even – lies at the heart of the UN's reason for being but the nature of the aspect, the sesquiquadrate, scatters obstacles in its path. This aspect gives potential for it to act – or perhaps make policy – in a domineering way, potentially inclining it towards misguided actions, pride and extreme self-will. It can manifest as wrong-headedness and may cause it to sow the seeds of its own destruction, giving the potential for foolish actions to destroy the fruits of its own hard work. It also signifies that its impulse to bring about change will be met with resistance.

The other thing that strikes you when first looking at the chart is the so-called 'weakness' of Mars, a planet of central significance as it rules both the Sun and ascendant signs. In Cancer, sign of its fall, Mars cannot so easily express its inherent assertiveness and this is exacerbated by its fourth-house location. Mars represents the ability to act and make a positive impact, and its very close conjunction with Saturn (also in Cancer and in detriment) can afflict and render it ineffectual. This, in combination with the chart imbalance in favour of air and against earth, may help explain why it has difficulty in turning its ambitions into reality.

Moreover, Mars is closely aspected by Venus which, whilst in dignity in Libra, is potentially hampered by her close neighbours, Jupiter, Neptune and Chiron in so far as this conflation can give rise to illusions and unrealistic desires. This begs the question whether the UN isn't sometimes deluded over what it can achieve.

We can look at Mars to learn about the nature of the UN's ambitions. Its strong links with Saturn and Cancer suggest that these are very traditional and conservative, which is something of an anomaly given that there is something radical about its stated aims of

bringing lasting peace and prosperity to the world. One might reasonably expect to see a greater emphasis on signifiers of progressive reform, on social and political change, for example, with more Aquarius or eleventh and twelfth house representation. Instead, the emphasis is on the domestic sphere with the strong Cancer-Capricorn and fourth house.

For all this being a highly visible global organisation, much is going on behind the scenes, behind closed doors and in secrecy even, as you would expect with the Sun and Mercury in Scorpio.

#### *Having an impact on the domestic scene*

The ambitions of the UN are oriented more towards making changes to people's domestic lives, and it seeks to achieve its aims for the global collective through the local and domestic arena. You could say that it goes about its business quietly and without clamour, as befits Mars in Cancer. Certainly, the greatest impact it has had in the world has been in giving humanitarian relief and easing problems relating to the basic requirements of human life: food, shelter, parenting, sanitation, basic healthcare, a homeland in which to live, in other words, all Cancerian concerns that come under the influence of the Moon, which rules the fourth house of the chart and symbolises Divine Mother.

Cancer is further emphasised as the Moon's north node is in it and the draconic Sun is in the last degree of Cancer, which implies that these are its most deeply-held values and that this is the direction in which it seeks to move, as well as the long-term ambitions it cherishes. The UN clearly has a natural affinity with the feminine qualities which it seeks to unfold through its protective, nurturing, mothering activities. The north node is in the third house of education and much of its work involves training people – women especially – in developing countries in how to help themselves to provide the basic necessities of life.

Altogether, I think this shows how the UN is working around its deficiencies, if the Cancerian Mars-Saturn can be described in that way, by being realistic in what it can hope to achieve in practical terms. It is very aware of its practical limitations and has a special genius for setting about achieving its ambitions in a more discreet manner. After all, Mars makes an exact quintile aspect to Venus which shows its special talent for achieving its ends peacefully and through diplomacy and through everyday affairs relating to the domestic matters of different nation-states where change is needed in order to redress inequalities and injustice.

#### *Acting wisely*

The UN seems to know that it must achieve its lofty goals through making changes to the living conditions, rights and educational standards of the poorest people on the planet. It may well face real challenges to its effectiveness, but it is by no means prevented from taking action altogether. It has all cardinal signs on the angles and its most important planets are in angular houses. Whilst it can take action it has, as yet, no power of its own and cannot act independently of the nation-states which comprise it. It is faced with immense

challenges in trying to reconcile the conflicting interests of different nations, and the difficult balancing act it is forced to perform is symbolised by the strong Libra in the chart, which is shown by the seventh-house Sun, the Libran stellium and the overall cardinal-air balance. Its identity consists in balancing national sovereignty against international idealism and balancing national security against international security.

Libra and the seventh house are in a sense about wisdom in action, and given such a range of conflicting national interests, how else can the UN proceed other than by constantly looking to find common ground and areas of general agreement if complete deadlock is to be avoided? At the same time, it is seeking fairness and justice in everything it does. How else could it be effective if it wasn't endowed with a huge talent for tact and diplomacy, peaceful negotiation being the preferred approach to all things. The UN must act wisely in order to accomplish the great balancing act of respecting the national sovereignty of so many different peoples whilst at the same time pushing gently ahead towards realising its ideals.

### *Sovereignty*

The issue of sovereignty is an interesting one. The Sun rules the fifth house of the chart, and we find Pluto there in Leo. If we consider the soul lesson of the Sun in Scorpio then the mission of the UN is Peace through Love. But it will be frustrated in its endeavours to act as the 'definite guarantee of peace' that Woodrow Wilson hoped the League of Nations would become and which the United Nations in its turn adopted. Jussi Hanhimaki concludes that 'as long as the concept of nation state is the basic form of organising the different entities we know as countries, as long as there is something called the national interest, as long as governments are responsible for the well-being (or lack) of their citizens, the UN will lack the means of acting independently. It remains in other words, a tool of nations.'

What might be the significance of Pluto in Leo in the fifth and how should we interpret it? As death to sovereignty? As the transformation of our concept of nationhood and how national entities are ruled? Is it perhaps calling for a radical re-think of the way national leaders behave as representatives of the people whom they serve?

Pluto makes an exact quincunx to the midheaven, so it is clearly an important and visible part of its mission. Whilst the UN's fifth house is dominated by the Sun, symbol for the Spirit, its fourth house is ruled by the Moon, Soul. The Moon in the UN's chart is in Gemini and conjunct Uranus, indicating that power is to be shared with the people upholding the principles of justice, equality and true democracy. The fact that the Moon is conjunct the dragon's head would seem to point the way forward as being true democracy for nations in which Aquarian principles of brotherhood are upheld.

### *Children*

In the shorter term, it is easy to see the strength of the UN's fifth house in action through the good work it has always done for children. Little wonder that UNICEF has won the hearts of

all people through its achievements which include a significant reduction in child mortality and raising of nutritional, healthcare, educational and social welfare standards of children especially in developing countries.

### *Human Rights*

The fact that human rights is so important a concept for the United Nations is shown by the very 'human' or specifically feminine resonance of its chart through the nurturing quality of Cancer and the fourth house in combination with the strong impulse towards legality and justice as shown in the strong Libra/seventh house influences.

Despite the fact that much remains to be done in securing equal human rights for all people around the world, the UN has nevertheless championed the issue and brought about a major achievement through the International Bill of Rights, a universally approved set of principles, as this set the benchmark and has given the nations a universally accepted set of ideals to work towards. The main perpetrators of abuse are, by and large, nation states, not individuals and so we cannot expect the UN to be successful in its ultimate aim whilst the old-world mindset of nation-state rulers prevails.

Hanhimaki asks whether the UN is now obsolete and unnecessary given that it clearly still has a very long way to go in achieving its central aims of achieving peace, prosperity and equal human rights. He reaches the conclusion that it is not; rather, it is an indispensable organisation that has made the world a better place, as its founders hoped it would.

He also recognises that it represents a 'true gathering of the family of nations' or the 'parliament of man'. I like to think that this is what is being symbolised by the fourth house Mars-Saturn in Cancer, something of inherent strength and not weakness at all.